

Future by Hopping Mad - Chrissy

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Summary: Joyce has a rough night. Based in season one. Hopper helps her out...

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Authors Note: As I've said before, there are not nearly enough Jopper fics out there!

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She couldn't remember the last time she had felt pain like this. Sure, with Lonnie she had to deal with the physical blows, and even the emotional manipulation that he managed to work into their relationship... but this time, this pain – the pain of losing a son, it's more than she can handle. Will means more to her than her own life. She lays curled on the floor of the lounge, she has no idea where Jonathan is, and she is for once glad he is not here. She can't find the energy to pretend anymore. Laying on the hard floor and letting the emotional pain wash over her is all she can do.

She doesn't know how long she has been laying on the hard floor, curled in a ball, shivering and just letting the emotional pain wash through her. A knock at the door quietens her sobs and she hopes whoever it is will just go away.

"Joyce," she knows the voice calling through her front door, it's Hopper. She remains where she is, still unable to face even one of her oldest friends. "Look Joyce, you aren't answering your phone and I-" he stops talking and she hears the door handle turning, she had forgotten to lock the door. She had remembered to take the phone off the hook – but didn't lock the damn door. Jesus.

She should be embarrassed to be found in this state, but instead she gives up and lays her head back on the floor.

"Oh no," she hears him mutter, his heavy footsteps approach her in a rush and he kneels down beside her, his hand going straight to her back and the pressure of his hand makes her turn to face him – as

much as she had thought she wanted to be alone... having him beside her, his physical presence calmed her. It always had.

"Hopper," she croaks, and tries to rise.

"No, no," and before she can respond, he has scooped her in his arms and carried her to her bedroom. She doesn't remember him visiting enough to know which room hers was, but he walked without hesitation and gently lay her down. He pulls up her comforter and sits on the edge of the bed, his hand resting on her hip.

"I'm so sorry," she mutters and hides her face. "I just... I have no energy."

"Trust me Joyce, I know." He sighs heavily and absently his hand begins running up and down her body, over the blankets. She shivers at the touch and realises suddenly that she's allowed the chief of police into her personal space once more. What was she doing? They weren't teenagers anymore! It was then that his words hit her. *Sarah, he understands because of his daughter.*

"Oh Jim," she struggles into a sitting position and opens her arms, he hesitates for only a second before moving into her arms. He is so much larger than her, and before long the roles are reversed, and she is in his lap, arms wound around his neck and head pressed against his chest. She has never felt so safe in all her life. She knows, despite their past, that he would do anything to help her. Sure, they fought, and she could drive him up the wall – it certainly goes both ways. But ultimately, she would drop everything for him as much as he would for her. She thinks this probably means she loves him, but the jury is still out on whether she is *in* love with him. There was no doubt in her mind that she found Hopper *very* attractive. I mean, what woman in Hawkin's hadn't thought that at least once?

She shuffles in his lap and tries to move closer. She wants to be inside him, she wants him to hold her and hide her from everything. But instead of getting closer, she feels him twitch beneath her and a gasp escapes his mouth. She chuckles softly against his chest and wiggles a little more, forgetting everything for just one moment.

"Joyce," he all but growls her name. "Stop, please."

He tries to still her with his arms, but she ends up pressed further against him, and suddenly the giggling stops, and she feels her own breath hitch in her throat. Before she can think straight he has pushed her away and leapt from the bed.

"Wait, Hop... I-" she throws the covers out of the way and grabs his arm before he can dash from the room. Trying desperately to gather her thoughts. "Hopper," she says, a little more firmly. "I'm sorry." She says, and he slowly turns to her.

"I would be taking advantage," he says. "I would never, ever do that to you. I hope you know that Joyce."

"I'm not saying you should fuck me right now," she reaches up on the tip of her toes and cups his face with one of her hands. "Look at me, Jim." He slowly turns his worried gaze on her. "Just, lay with me. Please." She moves her hand down and takes his hand. "We aren't teenagers, we can show self-control – right?" He nods slowly and follows her back to bed. This time she removes her pants and blouse, and gestures to his clothes.

"Are you sure?" He asks her, his brow still furrowed in concern.

"If it weren't for you, I would still be laying on my lounge floor." She states and climbs back into bed. "You don't *have* to stay – but I would like it." She blushes, trying not to think of how badly she *does* want this to go further. How could she think such a thing when her son is missing? She knows that sex would do nothing to solve this, perhaps this is her mind trying to cope. Either way, a feeling of guilt presses heavily down on her heart.

"Okay," she peeks out from under the covers to watch him undress. She still finds her eyes drawn to the slight erection and bites her lip to remind herself that this is entirely the wrong time to be sleeping with Hopper.

He lays behind her, gently taking her into his arms the way they did as teenagers. He had always taken such great care of her, always. They lay listening to the creak of the trees outside, and she listened to the beating of his heart and his slow sure breaths. She lay lost in her thoughts for so long that when she finally snapped back to reality

she was surprised to find him still awake.

"Hopper," she whispers. "I've been thinking... I'm sorry about tonight, I think it's..."

"Joyce, please. Don't apologise." He whispers gruffly. "Don't you remember what I did when I lost Sarah, when my marriage fell apart?" She did. She knew he had slept around, tried to kill his pain with women and alcohol. "I want to be here for you, but not in that way." Suddenly she wondered if perhaps she was totally wrong, maybe he didn't feel for her the way she did for him. Could she have been that off centre?

"Okay," she says quietly.

"Not right now, anyway." She feels her heart skip a beat. "We are going to find Will, we are going to bring him back. Then there is going to be nothing that could stop me." She chuckles a little at this, and she suddenly feels a bubble of hope in her chest. With Jim Hopper by her side, she has the best chance in the world of finding Will alive and bringing him home. She also now has a future to look forward to, one in which she may be able to find happiness after all.

The End.